


SERVICE RHYMES

BURT

FRANKLIN

JENNESS



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Service Rhymes

BY

BURT FRANKLIN JENNESS

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By BURT FRANKLIN JENNESS

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TO MY WIFE

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S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE BALANCE.

What matters who you were back there—
What wealth was yours, or mine—
If hailed, well met, at club affair,
Or where you went to dine.

What gain that you the gods endow,
Or me they scorn to meet;
Life's red inked entries tally now,
On war's great balance sheet.

What good that you were grubbing ore
Where social strata ran;
Your rifle pit now reeks with gore,
And you're a fighting man.

What matters you're a thoroughbred,
When we're knee deep in mud—
With shrapnel screaming overhead—
Can blood be more than blood?

You're only one of the boys, out here,
Can never this law defy—
You've an equal chance for all that's dear,
And an equal chance to die.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE MEN OF THE SEA.

Have you felt the appeal, seen life in the
 real,
Of the men who people the seas?
Have you thought as they think, felt what
 they feel,
Touched elbows with such men as these?

Big hearted and sturdy, simple and true,
Toil calloused, carefree and brave;
Full chested, red blooded—these men who
 do
And dare, in the life on the wave.

Have you stood on the bridge with the
 watches at night?
Have you taken a trick at the wheel?
Have you hungered, and frozen? Been
 stabbed in a fight?
You know, then, the things that they feel.

Do you know the plight, on a storm ridden
 night,
Of the lonely mid-watch at the helm?

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Gulped in the blackness, and bludgeoned
 with fright—
Lost in a tempest torn realm?

With oilskins wrapped to his shivering
 form,
Stiff with the sleet and the snow;
Lashed by the flail of the biting storm,
And the cold, when it's twenty below.

Alone with the sea, in a hell of its own,
Crouching for lee where he can;
Blinded, and chilled clean through to the
 bone—
God! But it takes a man.



S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE LURE OF THE EAST.

This is the spell of the Orient—
The lure of the far, far East,
A lure that is soft and luxuriant—
A bidding to sate of a feast
That is spread with the viands of pleasure,
Replenished again and again.
And music, each sensuous measure
Attuned to the passions of men.
In a land where little is given—
Where the game is to buy and to sell.
In a land with the virtues of Heaven—
A land with the sinning of hell.

You come to the East with a conscience
And the failures of others, to guide.
For a while you are upright and honest—
And God only knows how you tried.
Striving at first to be decent—
Fighting, and losing the fight.
Taking a drink to be social—
Hitting it up for the night.
Then you fall, like the other poor devils—
Succumb with a grace to your fate.
It's the spell of the East that has got you,
As it gets them all, soon or late.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

It's the lure of the fly to the grayling—
Gaudy, and brilliant hued;
But men are the fools who are trailing—
And Satan is casting the food.
It's the call of the quail in the cover—
The lure of the flame to the moth.
The call of the thrush for it's lover—
The call of the mate to betroth.
Softly at first it steals o'er you—
Dreamy and sweet, like a breath
Of incense or sandal, o'erwhelming
Your senses, and silent as death.
Till the air grows heavy with perfume—
You're happy, without and within.
Little you care for what may be—
And less for what might have been.

The blissful siesta at midday—
The drive, in the late afternoon.
And then for the nightly revel—
Women, and wine, and the moon.
The feasting, the music, the dancing—
The clandestine moments between.
The sweet-scented gardens enhancing
A flight from the ball-room scene.
White shoulders agleam in the moonlight,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

A form that is truly divine.
Eyes with the dull glow of passion—
Tongues that are loosened by wine.

The clinking of glasses, and pledges,
Sealed with a kiss of champagne.
Rollicking songs and laughter—
A speech from a reeling brain.

Women as fair as a lily—
Hair that glistens and glows.
Skin with the softness of velvet,
And white as Fuji's snows.
Lips with the blush of roses,
Eyes that sparkle with wine.
The perfume of blown cherry blossoms,
And flowered wistaria vine.
But the roses will fade in the morning,
When the rouge and the powder are gone;
The eyes will cease to be sparkling—
The cheeks will be pale and wan.

* * * *

You are down in the native quarter
Taking a last little fling,
Where the samisens creak their weird
 melodies,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

And the geisha girls dance and sing.
The stars are reeling and dancing,
And love is afloat on the breeze.
Virtue is drowned in a bumper—
And care in the seven seas.
The tropical moon is a bibber—
And he's not the only one.
The bubbles of life are bursting—
—And the night is not half begun.

* * * *

Alone in your ricksha at day-break—
Remorseful, and bitter with hate.
Back to your ship, or your barracks—
Going on duty at eight.

—And so the night's revel is ended—
And all of the nights are the same.
Some are more hellish than others,
But none of the nights are tame.
Thus it has been from beginning—
Thus will it be to the end.
A power that draws men to sinning—
A force that will crush, and will rend.
A lure that is soft and luxuriant—
A bidding to sate of a feast.
This is the spell of the Orient—
The lure of the far, far East.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE CAVALRY.

It's up with the leather,
We're riding together.
It's blow Boots an' Saddles.
Ho! Ho! Boots an' Saddles!
In foul or fair weather
The troop is afield.

It's stirrup an' straddle,
The pack strap an' saddle,
With mounts neck an' neck, Oh!
The hoofs, how they echo!
It's up an' skeedaddle,
The troop is afield.

O' life in the service!
The praise you deserve is
In cavalry troopin'
The dashin'—the whoopin'—
The cavalryman's nerve is
The keenest, afield.

Boots 'n' Saddles, they say,
Is the gent that'll pay
All your chits an' your debts—
All your wagers an' bets—
So it's up an' away!
The troop is afield.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

SERGEANT REILLY.

The "Prince," that's what they called him;
Pat Reilly was his name;
The whitest little sergeant, Jim,
In all the fightin' game.
His heart was where the chevron
Of another man 'u'd be,
An' always kind o' shinin' on
His whole company.

I'll tell ye they're not makin' men
Like Sergeant Reilly now;
An', Jim, as sure as shootin', when
We've had our last pow-wow,
An' Gabri'l sounds the last assemble'
For good marines to fall
In with their comrades, you will see
Pat Reilly lead 'em all.

But I wuz goin' to tell ye, Jim,
(Confound it, boy, my eyes
Are waterin' so)—the thoughts o' him
They jest make somethin' rise
Up here, and kind o' choke me; well,
You've heard o' San Juan hill,
An' how the army give 'em hell

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Fer an' hour or two until
The navy guns, from down the bay,
Were p'inted up the banks,
An' how the army won the day
With Cubans on their flanks?
Well, I was campin' down that way,
An', Jim, I'll tell ye right,
The only hell I saw that day
Was Sergeant Reilly's fight.

We were ordered up to fill
The gaps the Spaniards made;
We flanked the left, and charged the hill
With Shafter's main brigade.
The shot an' shell began to pour
From block-house and from trenches;
The shrapnel 'round us burst an' tore,
The air was full o'stenches.

Shafter's men were droppin' fast;
The hill got rough and steeper;
An' every charge we made, we passed
The dead a-pilin' deeper.
I saw the Cap'n fall, an' then
The First Lieutenant follered;
The fire was witherin' our men,
The ranks were thin an' hollered.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

They waited for the word again,
Their blood up for repeatin'
The charge, when, Jim, my God! our men,
Yes, Jim, they wuz retreatin'!
Then I heard an awful yell,
An' saw a flag a-wavin';
An' in that avalanche o' hell
An' din o' groans an' ravin',

Was Sergeant Reilly wavin' toward
The scattered ranks, our pennant,
An' in his hand he held the sword
Of our First Lieutenant.
He beckoned, yelled, then leaped an' stood
Above us like a child.
We rallied—as he knew we would—
An' then, by God! he smiled.

The guns were meltin' Shafter's men
Like sunshine melts the dew.
They charged an' fell, an' charged again,
An' each time left a few.
They tried to reach the foot-hill trench,
They fought for hill-side lee;
Their musketry had failed to quench
The block-house battery.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

We follered Reilly where he led,
We climbed the rugged reach;
Our comrades fell, and over dead
We crept into the breach.
Higher! Higher! Up the grade
We drove the dusky devils,
From hole an' ditch an' ambuscade
We broke their hellish revels.

We led the regulars at last,
The block-house loomed up nearer;
The snipers' haunts were clearin' fast,
Their game was gettin' dearer.
In open ranks we gained the hill,
We stormed that shack o' death,
An' charged the swarmin' hive until
We felt the guns' hot breath.

We poured the lead like all hell fire
Through port hole, chink an' door;
We dropped, an' on our bellies higher
Crawled, an' give 'em more.
The order came to charge again
(I can hear it ringin' yet.)
Sergeant Reilly faced his men
An' every beggar met

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

That kind o' look we knew so well,
That made men want t' die
For him. (Why, we'd 'a' charged through
hell

An' never questioned why.)
An' when he leaped ahead a pace
An' stood there, without cover,
A soldier's smile upon his face,
As calm as any lover,

The air so full o' smoke an' shells
—It seemed like they would blind us—
You should 'a' heard the cheers an' yells
From Shafter's men behind us.
God! but how we fought 'em back,
The block-house was surrounded,
An' roof, an' floor, an' shrapnel crack
Were stuffed with dead an' wounded.

One battery yet was speakin' loud
An' our front ranks were pourin'
Metal fast, but through the cloud
O' smoke, she kept on roarin'.
Then Reilly spied the block-house door,
All sort o' cracked, an' burnin',
An' with a score o' men or more

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

He charged! An' then a-turnin'
(Yes, Jim, I recollect it well)
His face grew ghastly white,
An', then, he crumpled up an' fell:
My God! Jim, what a sight!
Well, I guess that's 'bout all, Jim,
'Cept I was by his side
Before the boys had hardly missed him
—An' in my arms he died.

O' course, the army won the day,
'Cause when the sergeant fell
Our boys, like yaller hounds at bay,
Jest turned an' run like hell.
Then Shafter's men came on the run
An' charged the block-house door;
O' course they silenced *that one* gun,
An', well—there wa'n't no more!

I jest thought I'd tell ye, Jim,
How Sergeant Reilly died.
(There, son, my old eyes are dim
Again) I s'pose it's pride
That comes o' servin' (seems to me)
A man that's white clean through,
'N' on judgment day, Jim, I hope we
Can tell him so, don't you?

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE ARMY MULE.

I've rode Kentucky thoroughbreds,
An' Derbyshire mounts.
I've jockeyed for the royal heads,
An' raced for dukes an' counts.
I've bronco busted on the plain—
Know every trick an' rule
Of every beast that draws a rein—
Except the Army mule.

It's my delight to rope a steer,
I've broken colts galore,
I've seen the wild herds buck an' rear,
A thousand head or more.
In fancy horseflesh I've a pride,
But where I play the fool
Is in the barrick-yard, astride
That on'ry Army mule.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE VERDICT.

“I’m waitin’ for trial tomorrow;
Drunk when on duty’s the charge,
An’ I’m locked in this ‘castle’ o’ sorrow
—Not even a prisoner at large.
It’s a ‘General,’* an’ all that goes with it;
Gold lace, an’ side-arms, an’ such;
If it wa’n’t for the rank, an’ the pith, it
Means, I wouldn’t mind it so much.
I’m guilty as hell, an’ they know it,
’T aint much use t’ make a defense.
They’ll think it’s a bluff, but I’ll throw it,
—I know it’s my second offense.
But it wasn’t my watch, t’ begin with,
I was only the mornin’ relief;
Came aboard with the bunch I had been
with,
At midnight—an’ then came to grief.
Was ordered on anchor watch duty
T’ relieve a poor guy who was sick.
Jag? Yes, I had a beauty,
But I stood up as straight as a stick,
Saluted, an’ started up for’ard,
When the stuff sort o’ went to my
head,

*General Court Martial.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

An' I pitched in the scuppers, t' starb'ard,
So drunk that they thought I was dead.
I'm a long timer, too, in this outfit,

Four years—an old salt, you will say;
Jest a month more to do, an' then I'd quit
With a snug little pile laid away.

Came in on that wave o' preparedness,
Thought I would just take a look
At the world, an' then somehow a madness
Jest swept me along like a brook.

A madness for life an' adventure
For a fling on the great open sea,
Where you're free from the world's petty
censure,

An' can work out your own destiny.
Where you buck against lives in the
makin',

Where men are hewed out o' the rough
An' the timber is strained to the breakin'
—An' will break (or it's damned good
stuff).

Where the bigness o' the universe awes
you,

Till you feel like a helpless child;
(Yet the thought of returnin' abhors you),
An' your soul is lost in the wild.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

O, God! how I loathed to abide it!

How I've cursed the first day that I
came!

I've scoffed at the men who must ride it,
But I love the old sea just the same;
From the great purple rim that surrounds
it,

To the rainbow hues of the dome.
The mysterious life that abounds it;
It's wild, I know, but it's home!
I know I've been sort of a rounder,
With cards, an' women, an' booze,
But I've known philosophy sounder:
I know what it means to lose.
The things that will satisfy cravin',
When the heart is a-hunger inside;
The things that keep a man slavin',
And shore up his totterin' pride;
That will lift him up out o' the mire
An' give him the guts to fight,
An' set his ambitions afire,—
The things that will keep a man right.
A home, with the firelight glowin',
A welcome that comes from the heart;
Some one to care where you're goin',
An' bid you Godspeed when you start.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Good will, that you don't have to borrow,
Friends, that you can't buy or sell.

I must write to the old folks tomorrow,
—An' maybe a word—to Nell.

The court! I forgot! an' me schemin'
How soon I'd be quittin' this pack;
But a year as a striper! I'm dreamin'!
—I'd be too damned low to go back.

I s'pose it's a year at hard labor,
I guess it's the lock-step for mine,
Or a cell, with a guard for a neighbor,
Or, maybe it's both—with a fine.

I'm feelin' as weak as a kitten;
Three days bread an' water, I reck'.
Well, they don't make a guy very fittin':
—I'll jest lay down on the deck.

* * * * *

Acquittal, you say I am ratin'?
—O, that's a mistake, I expect;
—Circumstances were extenuatin'?"
“Well, somethin' to that effect.”

* * * * *

“Wonder if Nell is still carin'—
—What would the old folks have said?
—I'll go back to 'em now—God sparin',
An' live like a man—till I'm dead.”

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

GRUB.

Y' can soldier in a trainin' camp
Fer ninety days er so;
An' hike until y' get a cramp
In every bloomin' toe;
Y' can curry down th' hosses,
Carry slops, er dig a trench;
Mind a dozen cook tent bosses,
Spread a mess er scrub a bench;
Y' can sleep without complainin'
With a bunkie that's a dub;
March in sun, er when it's rainin'
But ye must have grub!

Grub! Grub!

Y' can board an army transport,
With a couple thousand guys;
Throw a front an' be a sport—
Chew tobacker an' look wise;
Y' can roll up in yer blankit
Somewheres on th' upper deck,
Till ye feel a deck hand yank it
Off, an' souse ye in th' neck;
Y' can stand at drill, er quarters
When she's rollin' like a tub,
Till yer green as shaller waters—
Then ye won't want grub!

Grub! Grub!

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE DIFFERENCE.

When a fellow's up against it,
And he hasn't got a cent,
And his shabby clothes belie him
For a high toned gent;
Then his friends will, ordinary,
Hand him out the stony stare;
For the hard-luck down-and-outer
Isn't wanted, anywhere.

But I've been thinkin' of the difference
In the way they treat a guy
When he's all got up in khaki,
And he's ready for to die.
When the bugles start to blowin'
Then life don't seem quite so raw;
For a hobo is a hero,
When he's leavin' for the war.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE CALL OF THE SEA.

Have you ever stood on a lonely shore be-
side the restless sea,

With only the sound of the breakers' roar,
and your thoughts for company?

Have you watched the billows rise and
swell, till their crests were tipped with
spray?

Have you felt the silence before they fell,
seen them quiver and totter and sway,
Poised like a bird, its pinions lashing, in
vain, the tempest to soar;

And then in a crashing, plunging, dashing
column advancing o'er

Their prostrate ones, where the swift ebb
runs, heard them break with a mighty
roar

And a rumble like booming of distant guns
echoed along the shore?

Have you gazed seaward till your eyes
were dim and your rapture knew no
bond,

Watched the twilight shades on the purple
rim, and wondered what's beyond?

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Have you stood alone in God's great room,
 when the sunset was tinting each wall,
Was your soul too narrow to quite consume
 the splendor of it all?

Were you awed by the grandeur, borne up-
 ward until Heaven seemed nearer to
you—

Did the vastness, the farness of God's na-
 ture thrill, till it got you, through and
through?

Have you lingered at night on a friendly
 shore, lost in some fond reverie,

Heard a voice through the din of the break-
 ers' roar? Friend, that was the call
of the sea.

Have you mused o'er the waves and tried
 to peer through, pondered the silence
they gave,

Gasped at the thought of the depths they
 lead to, where millions have found a
grave?

Did you think of the treasure and secrets
 they hold, those fathoms of darkness
below,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Of the wealth of the nations, more precious
 than gold, that has gone there—and
 is to go?

Have you seen the grace of the gull on the
 wing, as he poised on a foamy crest,
Heard the petrel's cry, seen the bosun-bird
 swing through the heavens with never
 a rest?

Have you watched the wingéd denizens
 leap, or the porpoises diving at play,
Through the mist the red orb of the sun
 sink to sleep, and the redder one rise
 at day?

Have you studied the fleecy, breeze driven
 clouds, as they hung o'er a summer
 sea,

Seen them rift and drift, like silken shrouds
 of shim'ring transparency?

Do you know the scowling nimbus head, or
 the sign of the mackerel sky,

Have you watched the waves where the
 shadows sped, as the gathering clouds
 rolled by?

Seen the white caps play 'neath a cloudless
 sky, and sport their emerald hue,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Seen the darkening waves, when the clouds
 drew nigh, reflect their deepest blue?
Heard the tempest howl, seen the heavens
 scowl, and the sea grow inky black,
The clouds hurl javelins of flame, with a
 growl, and the mad waves hurl them
 back?

Have you sighed for these voices of nature
 again, have you longed for the wild of
 the sea,

From the centres of toil and the haunts of
 men, has your fettered soul strained
 to be free?

Has the wanderlust harnessed your guid-
 ing star, is there a yearning for some-
 where to be,

A restless desire for lands ocean far? You
 know, then, the call of the sea.



S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE NATIONAL ARMY.

When the Top-Sergeant's grouchy an' outs
with a curse

At the mud on your leggins; or, what's
even worse,

One shoe is your bunkie's an' one of 'em
ain't.

Don't fall down in ranks, for a soldier
don't faint,

Jest come to attention, with eyes to the
front;

Your legs'll support you—you may think
they won't—

It's ninety more days that they'll wallop
you through,

Buck up, for they're makin' a reg'lar of
you.

When the Corp'ral has drilled you until
your poor spine

Is limp as a gun rag, don't whimper or
whine;

Jest hitch up your belt for supportin' your
chest,

An' "Shoulder!" an' "Carry!" 'n'

"Present!" with the rest.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

When the chow is all bad, from the prunes
to the spud,

The soup is like water—the coffee like
mud;

You're gettin' your pay—an' experience,
too,

They're makin' a regular reg'lar of you!



S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE ROOKIE.

When you are a rookie, an' most o' the
crew

Are natcherly makin' a goat out o' you;
The ship is unsteady—an' you are too sick
To turn to an' swing up your bloomin'
hammick—

Jest break out a blanket an' roll up on
deck—

Don't mind if some lubber does step on
your neck,

You've joined the outfit, so show 'em your
grit;

Buck up an' be happy—you're doin' your
bit.

When letters from home are all trembly
an' blue,

An' matters back there are discouragin'
you;

When the pages are blurred, for the tears
in the way,

Jest up with your neck'ch'f an' brush 'em
away,

Then roll up th' makin's—forget what has
been—

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

An' mosey up for'ard where the gang is,
an' grin;

You're only a rookie, but shoulder your
kit;

Buck up an' be happy—you're doin' your
bit.

If your ship is torpedoed an' sinks like
a lead,

An' half the crew's wounded—the other
half dead—

You're all shot to pieces, an' somewhere
in France

You're laid up in bed, an' your life is all
chance,

Why, think of the glory of *jest bein' there!*

Your shattered old leg it will do for a pair,

An' you were in range, or you wouldn't 'a'
got hit—

So, buck up—be happy—you're doin'
your bit.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE FATE OF NUMBER THREE.

Is it Dolan's name ye're speakin', Jim
Dolan, fire-room three?
Go easy, lad, it's truth I'm seekin'; mind
what ye're givin' me.
Yer father! Well God bless ye, son! If
what ye say is true,
Ye orter be th' proudest one that ever wore
th' blue.

Know him? Say, did I know Jim! What's
that? His death ye say?
My God! I can't * * Well, since it's him;
there lad, don't cry that way—
'Twas on the old ship Aspinwall, it hap-
pened, when one day
The fever struck us, like a squall, an' took
our mates away.

We'd passed the straits of Lombok, an'
into th' Celebes,
Bound for Yokohama's dock, laden with
disease.
The heat was scorchin' deck and frame;
below, it seemed, t' me

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

An' Jim, like hell's eternal flame was lit,
in fire-room three.

'Tween decks the fever raged; two were
dead, a dozen ailin';
It seemed like death had gripped th' crew,
an' God had cursed our sailin'.
Well, me an' Jim stood watch that night,
alone, in fire-room three,
Our mates were ravin' in their bunks—
fightin' eternity.

Pretty soon Jim came to me—a strange
look in his eye.
“My God!” I thought: “Is Jim to be the
next of us to die?”
“Do you believe,” he whispered low, “in
th' fate o' number three?
They say when two are called to go—a
third there's sure to be.

“I'm feelin' kind o' strange, tonight, sick?
No, not me,
But somethin', Bill, it aint jest right, here
in fire-room three.”

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

“Nerves,” says I, “lay off a bit, an’ go on
deck a spell;

I’ll feed ’er, Jim, until ye’re fit t’ come
below an’ give ’em hell!”

Well, Jim he cashed in, that night, we
buried him at sea.

An’ lad, it proved old Jim was right—for
he was number three.

An’ would ye believe it, son? As sure as
tides, it’s so;

Jim he was the last one of our crew t’ go.

An’ since that night that Jim cashed in,
he’s been more t’ me

Than all th’ hands that’s ever been on
watch, in fire-room three.

Since then I’ve sailed on many a ship, an’
stoked in number three—

An’ I reckon, some day, I’ll jest slip away,
like Jim—at sea.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE FLARE-BACK.

So they won't ship me over today, eh?
Too old, did ye say, an' too lame?
It's a hard knock, Cap'n, t' go 'way
An' know ye're clean out o' th' game.
That scar? Aye, Sir, it's a bad un;
Kind o' cripples th' leg some, I know.
Duty? Aye, Sir, 'Twas a mad gun,
Back in 'ninety, Wal, Cap'n, I'll go.

The story? Wal, now, Sir, ye're kind.
Set here, ye say? Thank ye, I will.
Seems good t'us old uns ter find
A "striper" who's kind t' us still.
Wal, Sir, you'll remember, I reckon,
When th' Ranger put in with her dead.
Night after her quarter-deck gun,
(Twelve-inch) run amuck in th' head.

You don't? Wal, Sir, may God spare you
Sich a sight as I saw there that day,
And th' hell that I lived through there, too,
That night in Pensacola Bay.
The Ranger wuz out fer a record
At target maneuvers that spring.
She wuz hittin', Sir, too, an' I 'spect 'u'd
'A' won it clean—but fer one thing.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Our pride wuz th' quarter-deck turret;
I wuz pointin' fer gun number four.
"Black Baby," we called her, an', Sir, it
Seemed like she knew it—an' more.
Wal, 'twas long about dusk uv a Friday,
We'd only a run more t' go.
An', Sir, I've seen gun crews in my day;
I've seen 'em that's fast, an' that's slow.

But, Gad! Sir, them lads wuz a-heavin'
Five hundred pound shell t' th' breach,
S' fast that th' lock wuz nigh seethin'
—An', Gad! How th' Baby 'u'd screech!
Wal, we steamed on th' range f'r th' last
run,
S' dark I c'u'd skeerce see th' raft.
"More speed on th' starb'd aft gun,"
Wuz th' word that th' Cap'n sent aft.

An', my God! not a man there c'u'd
answer,
(Ye'll 'scuse my expressin' things so.)
But th' crew wuz struck dumb to a man,
Sir,
'S if death sent the message below.
The place wuz s'plumb-full o' silence

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Ye c'u'd cut the air, Sir, with a knife,
An' somethin' gripped us like a sentence,
When th' Judge is condemnin' a life.

Wal, they loaded, then gazed at each other,
An' stood there, froze stark to th' gun;
Er fingered their throats like they'd
smother,

—Then th' siren blew twice fer th' run,
An' th' bugle blast sounded fer firin'.
Wal, that crew, Sir, wuz off like a shot;
Black as a stoker, perspirin',
Rammin' her home when she's hot.

Receivin', an' shovin', an' primin',
(Stripped t' th' waist they wuz, stark.)
Lockin' th' breech, an' no timin',
“Steady, now,” “Ready,” an' “Mark.”
We'd found th' spot, too, Sir, wuz makin'
A string that 'ud do th' craft proud.
Faster, th' breech-lock wuz breakin'
An' closin'—no heed o' th' cloud

O' th' blasphemous stuff from th' muzzle,
Chokin', but shovin' her down,
Makin' th' “Black Baby” guzzle
Th' lead, an' th' smokeless “brown.”
God knows, Sir, how long we wuz steamin',

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

But we'd made nigh a half o' th' run,
When o' sudden, I thought I wuz dreamin',
An' sailin' straight inter th' sun.

A million stars seemed t' be flashin',
An' then: O, my God, what a roar!
Like shriekin' worlds fallin' an' crashin'
—Then I didn't know nuthin' more
Till a lantern gleam 'woke me, an' turnin—
(It couldn't be worse, Sir, in hell.)
There, a mass o' charred flesh, an' still
 burnin',
Wuz our crew, in a heap, where they fell.

Ye can talk o' the sights in the trenches,
But th' hauntin' o' dead in that hole,
The shrieks o' the dyin'; the stench;
They stab, Sir, ter yer very soul.
Stripped, like a derelict hulk; dead,
Th' Lieutenant lay, shy o' both legs,
I wuz jammed agin th' after bulkhead,
With th' rammer shaft piled on my pegs.
Kind o' felt so, at first, they wuz missin',
But a couple there looked like my own,
In th' rags, though, I saw somethin'
 glisten,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

—'Twas a part o' my own shin bone.
Wal, that's 'bout th' heft o' th' tale, Sir,
'Cept I'm all that was left o' th' crew.
Gad! But you look a bit pale, Sir,
Don't mind what I've said—an' I'm
 through.

Ye're better now, Sir, I'll be goin';
I'll git along somehow, I 'spect.
A waiver, ye say? that's a-showin'—
What! fer me, Sir, my age an' defect?
Ye'll 'scuse me 'f I seem a bit soft, Sir;
I'll jes' wipe these old eyes s' I can
See your face: O, I know ye're an off'cer,
But, by God! Sir, ye're more—*ye're a man!*



S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

TO AN ALBATROSS

O, winged oracle of the seas;
O, seer of the Antipodes;
Nestling where the crests of spray
Kiss your wings of pearly gray,
And your breast of snowy white.
Half at rest; half in flight;
As I watch you out at sea.
Queen of birds, you seem to me,
As you poise and wheel, and toss
On the waves, O Albatross.

Fairest of the conjurers
You have been to mariners.
Mistress of their destinies;
Fate and fortune on the seas.
Prophet, sage, in you they ken,
As you hover over men
Born in superstition's grip,
Reared in romance of the ship,
Taught to fear and love the sea—
Mandates of heredity.
Denizens of nature's wild,
Simple as the faith of child,
Trusting God, the winds and tide,
And the sun and stars to guide.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Fearless of the worst at sea—
Fearful of all mystery.
Creatures of the stranger moods,
Servants of the latitudes,
By the aid of nature's forces
Shaping their uncertain courses;
Harnessing the elements,
By them, linking continents.
So the seamen live and die;
Knowing not a human tie—
Knowing not a faith or creed—
Pledging not a word or deed;
Stronger than their loyalty
To the service of the sea.

Students of the greater school,
Learning by the sterner rule
Of experience—and God
Suffers not to spare the rod.
In His flogging room, the woe
Of the tempest's wrath, they know.
Well they know the awful cost,
When their barks are tempest tossed,
Of a weakened yard, or stay.
Well they ponder on the way
Stormy petrels take their flight,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Or the falling mist at night.
As they heed the mackerel sky,
So they watch the sea birds fly.

Of nature's unwritten lines,
Omens of good luck, and signs
Of peril, not the least of these,
Is the bird-flight of the seas.
In the petrel's low unrest—
Like the cloud bank in the west—
In the sea gull's carrion greed,
Messages the seamen read,
Of the nearness of the storm,
Or, the floating corpse's form.
But *your* flight is one of weal,
When your gray wings flash and wheel
O'er the ocean's misty hem,
Just your coming means to them
Omen of fair winds, to cross
Their troubled course, O Albatross.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

CONSCRIPTION.

Far the West Wind sped the message
Over trail and desert plain,
Loud the East Wind roared the warning
To our ships upon the main.

By steam and wire and word of mouth,
Across our steel ribbed continent
To east and west and north and south,
A stern decree of nations went.

Men! Men! Men! Men!
Be it writ for woe or weal,
For home and liberty again
Must they set their hand and seal.

Over mountain trail and valley,
City, hamlet, farm and wood,
In mansion, cot, and lowly hovel,
People heard—and understood.

Plowmen pausing in the furrow
Caught the message on the breeze.
Women, weeping, clung the closer
To the children at their knees.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Labor lifted its grim visage—
Forge and anvil cold and still—
Mandates understood and bade it
Do God's—and the country's—will.

Leveled to the things more lowly,
Now are sects and creeds and laws.
“Barrel,” “curb,” and “closet” factions
Yield their weapons to the cause.

Talk no more of shirks and slackers!
Thrusts like these can bring but shame
To the very land that bore us,
And our sires' honored name!

Brand no more, with shame their man-
hood;
Send them not to foreign shores
With a stigma on their shoulders—
For those slackers may be yours.

Speak but well of those who, bearing
Arms, shall do the country's will.
Look you to your deeds of erring—
And for your country's sake, be still!

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

WIRELESS.

Swift as the messengers of light
That tread upon the heels of night,
Or, lightning as it earthward hies,
And splits the fabric of the skies;
Into the voiceless void, far flung—
The word of man, in every tongue.
A power in the cosmic plan,
Revealed by God; consigned to man.

A courier, whose messages
Speeding, silent, over-seas,
Spurn the leagues of latitude;
Flashing free, and unsubdued
By laws terrestrial; nor slaves
To the mandates of the waves,
Nor heed the tides that ebb and swell—
Save the ones ethereal.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE BLACK WATCH.

Ever heard th' black watch story?
Ask th' boys o' our old crew;
There's sea yarns a sight more gory,
But there aint a tale more true.

An' if th' boys are skeerce, your way,
('Spect they're nigh all dead by now.)
Ye can wait till Judgment Day,
An' ye'll hear it then, I 'low.

'Cause, no matter what th' color
Uv their sweatin', shinin' hide,
Er if they called 'em black, er yaller,
They wuz white men—when they died.

An' when th' black watch answers:
“Here!”

To that last roll call, on high,
In th' good book there'll appear
Th' tale o' how they come t' die.

It wuz down off San Diego
In th' spring o' ninety-eight;
Th' news it struck us like a blow,
O' how th' Maine had met her fate.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Wal, there wa'n't no peace o' livin'
On our packet after that;
An' th' fight our crew wuz givin'
O' them Spaniards! They wuz at

'Em hot, from reveille, an' fought
'Em clean up t' taps, at night—
In their minds—but you'd 'a' thought
Ye smelled th' powder, in their fight.

O' nights they'd swarm th' decks t' tell
Jest how they'd man th' turret guns,
An' how they'd face th' shot an' shell
'Mid their dead an' dyin' ones.

An' all th' time a-grinnin' 'round
The edge o' that 'ere braggin' crowd,
Th' stokers, gapin', stood spell-bound,
An' silent as a trooper's shroud.

Th' boys they called 'em yaller coons—
One fire-room crew wuz all
We had o' blacks—no octoroons
Or half-breed niggers, what you'd call

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

A black watch, they wuz, through an'
 through;
Six of 'em, in number four;
An' skeerce their jeers had died, that crew
Wished they had as many more.

Wal, you've read it all in hist'ry,
How we fought th' wind an' tide,
Through th' Straits, an' burned th' sea
Steamin' up on t' other side.

Fer days we bucked a sou'east trade
That 'ud freeze yer marrow bones;
O' nights a chill crep' in, that made
Us chatter like our teeth wuz stones.

Th' damp o' dog-days, too, 'u'd come,
An' heat 'twould do fer hell, I reck's,
S' cussed hot 'twould melt th' gum
O' yer hip-boots, washin' decks.

An' all th' time th' Spanish ships
Wuz racin', too, ag'in' th' tide,
P'inted straight t' where th' rips
O' Santiago's harbor ride.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Wal, we kep' her, night an' day,
Under forced draught, an' our men,
Deck an' stoke-hole, worked th' way
It's like they'll never work again.

Th' fireroom heat wuz well nigh hell;
Th' furnace mouths well nigh its fire;
Th' stokers, like th' damned t' dwell
Below, kep' heapin' fuel higher.

Through th' doldrums; Caribbean;
Steamin' nor'ard o'er th' brine;
Slavin', swinin' like a peon;
Nary a man there wuz t' whine.

Bearin's hot, an' packin's burnin';
Pistons spittin' tongues o' steam;
Racin' screws a-grumblin', churnin';
Cross-seas slappin' us abeam.

Days an' weeks we watched an' grovelled,
Till th' weeks rolled 'round again;
While below, th' black watch shoveled,
Stoked an' sliced—like whiter men.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Battle strung, an' nigh exhausted,
O' nights, th' crew off watch would gibe,
Taunt an' jeer, aye, oft accosted
Shamefully, th' black skinned tribe.

Scored th' black watch, too, as cowards,
'Fraid t' fight, an' 'fraid t' die.
Bid 'em shift their course t' sou'ards,
T' th' land o' mammy's lullaby.

Then th' day hove 'round fer sightin'
O' th' top-masts of our fleet—
Soon we'd be in line fer fightin';
Soon we'd feel a salvo's heat.

Th' Cap'n whistled down fer speed,
Steam-gauge, then, wuz climbin' higher;
Our faces, scorched, seemed like t' bleed,
Still th' old chief bellered: "Fire."

I wuz standin' boiler three,
At th' water-tender's post.
Our fire-room crew wuz white— an' *we*,
God help us—scored th' black watch most.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

'Twas nearin' time fer us t' quit,
Our watch wuz makin' fourteen-ten;
Craft a-shakin' like a broken sprit;
Safety-valve a-poppin' when—

My God! I heard a hiss o' steam,
An' then a shriekin', piercin' roar—
An' fightin' through a seethin' stream,
Our men wuz gropin' fer th' door.

I tried t' reach th' valves—but fell,
An' crawled, there in th' pit, fer air—
There may be tortures worse, in hell,
But I'd sooner take my chances there.

My guts wuz burnin' seemed, an' tight
Aroun' my neck a scaldin' line
Wuz chokin'—an' afore my sight,
Streaks o' red an' green 'u'd shine.

Then things kind o' eased, y' might say—
Didn't hear a sound, no more—
Felt all sort o' snug an' comfy—
Guess I wuz nearin' t'other shore.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

An' then it seemed like somethin' druv me
Nigh clean up'ards through th' air,
'N' I saw a big, black face above me—
An', God! th' whole black watch wuz
there!

I c'u'd see 'em, now, a-luggin'
Uv our white men to'ards th' door—
'N' then, at my throat, that cussed tuggin'
Come—'n' I didn't see no more,

Till I come to, up in th' sick-bay,
In a row o' clean, white beds,
Where, silent, on their pill'rs lay
A dozen other bandaged heads.

I looked a spell, from face t' face,
Then shet my burnin' eyes up tight—
O' them poor devils in that place,
Six wuz black—an' six wuz white!

O God! Th' nights o' pain that follered,
An' th' sleepless days, as well;
They begged, an' prayed, cursed an' hol-
lered,
Fer refuge from a livin' hell.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

But th' good Lord soon relieved 'em—
One by one th' black watch died.
In their blankets, wrapped, they heaved
 'em,
Lashed t' grate-bars, overside.



S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE SEA.

There's a space as high as Heaven; there's
a place as deep as hell;
There's a chunk of shining blue that lies
between;
There's an endless, trendless way, where
men meet and pass, unknown—
It's the nearest place to God you've ever
seen.

Stretching out between horizons, with a
starlit dome above,
There's a deep, dark, treacherous waste
that lies below;
It is neither earth nor sky; and we know
not whence nor why—
But it's there—and fitly, God has willed
it so.
It's the boundless, untamed sea, flowing
down from pole to pole;
It's a wilderness that thrills you through
and through;
Where hordes of nature's hidden forces
thunder 'round your puny soul;
It's a trail that cuts the universe in two.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

It is propping up the heavens, lest the constellations fall;

It is straining at the shores of east and west;

It is tempering the climes, from the glistening polar rimes

To the burning tropic trades that never rest.

There are men who love it better than the best land in creation—

And for aught that we can say, it's just as old.

It has lured men on for ages, tender youth, and wisest sages,

As the north has lured men on to grub for gold.

Bitter, cold, and unresponsive as a stark dead thing of hope,

More relentless than the ghosts of want and woe;

It has seen men bow before it, writhe and curse, despair and die—

To be cast into utter depths below.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Yet men have frozen, starved and plundered,
for the life they wouldn't trade;
In silence suffered all the torments of the
deep;
Seen their fevered bones decay; picked the
scurvied flesh away;
Faced their God—and prayed the night
would bring them sleep.

They, the men who've seen the worst; be
it famine, plague, or thirst;
They that harken to the wild—would have
it so.
It's the life! The lure! The goal! The
wanderlust that grips the soul—
And when they hear the sea a-calling, they
must go!

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

AFTER WAR—WHAT?

When the Gods of War have sated
Of their battle-crimsoned feasts,
And Fatherlands are devastated
By the money-gluttled beasts

Of greed and power, and humbly rise
Above the sodden fields again,
To stand before the Nations' eyes
Empires anew—what then?

Can races sprung from men whose seed,
Quickened in the very womb of war,
The spawn of those whose only creed
Was the hatred they were fighting for,

Can they bear other fruits than hate?
The sole pre-natal gift conferred
On men whose being incarnate
First beneath the ramparts stirred!

Can those war babes who toddle now
Across the graves where long have lain
Their murdered kinsmen fail to vow
Ere long to see the slayers slain?

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Can those mothers now, who heard
The blare of trumpets and the call,
Who 'twixt love and duty erred,
Can they forget it all?

Will they not bare the past and tell
Their young the awful truths of war?
And rather kindle in their breasts, than
 quell,
The hate their fathers perished for?



S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE BOAT RACE.

“D’ye hear that, Bill? She’s called away!
Do we guys work on racin’ day?
Well say! Y’ know yer Uncle Ben,
He aint the kind what’s workin’ when
The candy crew o’ this whole fleet
Is out in racin’ trim t’ beat
The ‘Pensy’s’ high-falut’n crew,
Champeens of Division Two.

“Come on Bill, now, chuck the grind.
Shine that bright work in y’ mind,
Er pass th’ word t’ that marine,
Let him squeegee decks an’ clean.
Tell ’im th’ bo’s’n left th’ word
T’ scrub the foc’s’le, you heard.
Come on’ Bill, up with th’ bunch,
Y’ know I’ve kinda got a hunch
Our boys’ll win that race today,
And I’ve got coin what talks that way.

“Say, Bill, I’ve seen that gang a-rowin’.
Course that’s th’ only way o’ knowin’
The stuff that’s in a race boat’s crew,
An’ say, I’m here t’ break t’ you
The news, that them Division kids

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Can't git a race boat off th' skids,
Side o' our crew, 'n' here's the green
What says we'll swipe the 'Pensy' clean.

“Here they come! Jest pipe th' way
Our lads are showin' up today.
See 'Skinny' Hazeltine, an' 'Hank,'
An' 'Bunny' Olcott, Bill, he drank
Enough las' night ter finish him,
But 'Bunny' 's right in racin' trim.
See 'Fatty' Brown, an' there is 'Hoke'
He looks like he could pull a stroke.
An' little Tim, the coxs'n, he
C'n steer anythin' 'at goes t' sea,
If any man in this outfit
C'n keep a racin' course—he's it.

“The for'ard turret, that's th' place
T' see the start o' this big race,
An' mebbe we can land a bet
Or two, on this performance, yet.
There's th' stake boats crusin' round,
Th' judges' launch is on th' ground.
An'—yes, there comes th' lubbers now!
Look! th' way they pull that scow,
Ketchin' crabs with every stroke,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

'N' their backs 'r' bent like they was
broke.

Hey! You lad! I've got a ten
T' stake on old Kentucky's men!
Make it twenty? It's a go!
Anythin' t' please, y' know!

“More? Why sure, jest send 'em 'round
Ter th' same old campin' ground,
Me an' Bill has got th' wealth!
You must be bettin' fer your health,
That tub o' yours could never win,
This here sea's a bit too thin,
Fer them lads t' be rowin' in.
Th' place fer them guys t' begin
An' end their racin' days in boats,
Er any other craft that floats,
Is scullin' 'round, until they're faint,
In catamarans, t' scrub an' paint
Th' side, an' not be posin' for
A racin' crew, o' man o' war.

“Say, Bill, they're off right now! An'
gee!!

Them candy kids has took th' lee,
Jest like Tim Hanan said they'd do.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Aw! Set down, we can't see through
You lads. Say, Bill, lend me ten?
Them guys is flashin' coin again.
Gainin'? Sure, they're walkin' now
Abaft the lumberin' lubbers' bow."

"Ten on 'Pensy!' " "Taken here!"
"Shove off there, make that coin appear."
"Ra! Ra! Ra! Ra! Ken-tuck-y!"
"We're half a length ahead, Bill, see!
Hey! There 'Pensy!' Get a net
Y' might ketch 'em faster yet!"
"Aw, go tell it th' marines!
Money talks—jest flash th' greens!"
" "Yankee—doodle—keep it up!" "
"Hi! Hi! 'Pensy'—Navy yup!"
"Ahoy! Kentucky, dinghy there!
Y' aint got a mile t' spare!
Throw that stroke oar overboard!
Listen t' th' coxs'n's word!
Together—now—one—two!"
"Pipe down! You, lad, they'll come
through!"
"Hi! Hi!—Yi! Yi!—Yi! Yi!—
Yi! Yi!
'Pensy!' 'Pensy!' 'Pensy!' Try!"

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

“Aw, Bill! Them bums are comin’ up
They’re comin’ like a frightened pup.
Pull, you spalpeens! Pull, I say!
Th’ stake ’s a hundred yards away.
They’re round th’ buoy—a length behind!
Aw, Bill! Them scrubs are losin’—mind?”
“ ‘Pensy!’ ‘Pensy!’ ‘Pensy!’ Hi!
We’ll put old Kentucky by.
‘Take—me—back—to old—Kentucky.’ ”
“Gee! Bill, them hounds are lucky!
Pull Kentucky! On th’ run!”
“Aw! Shoot ’em from a twelve inch gun,
They can’t pull a rowin’ race.”

“Hey, you, lad, right here’s th’ place
Fer any coin what’s gettin’ cold,
‘Pensy’ ’ll cover all y’ hold.”
“Ketch ’em with a boat hook there!”
“See ’em gaspin’ now fer air!”

“Aw, Bill, you lubber, can’t yer yell?
KENTUCKY! Pull there! Pull like—well,
Bill, aw, what’s the use! But, say,
We’ll go ashore next racing day.”

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

ODE TO MY BUNK.

Thou friend and counselor of the deep,
Sweet, unconscious hour of sleep,
Thou hypnotist of weary brain
And anæsthetic lure of pain,
I chant in drowsy ecstasy,
Thy praise, at close of day.
Unvanquished foe of modern life,
Yet friend to those in social strife
Who dissipate the hours of night
And seek thy counsel with the light
And in a comatoscious state—
Their vital force recuperate.
Thou leveler of rank and caste,
Thou commoner of the socially classed,
Thou comforter of rich and poor,
How bountiful thy store!
Thou refuge from the wearisome
Routine of officialdom.
Thou bold retreat from social tea,
And guide to sweet obscurity.
And for that over zealous sense
Of duty, thou'rt recompense.
When nestled in thy enfolding arms,
We're free from all official qualms.
And, whether sought at mid-day hour,
Or when the merry dance is o'er,
Thy welcome form is ever there
And it effaces every care.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE DESERTER.

From the Arctic floes to the Antipodal
 snows, the men who follow the sea,
Strange secrets hold, strange tales have
 told, but the strangest was told to me
By a sailor who lay, as I passed one day
 through the wards of St. Helene,
On his cot of white, and a sadder sight
 than he, I've never seen.

His gray locks lay on a brow of clay, and
 his dim eyes were sunken in.

He was an aged man—an American, far
 from home and kin.

On a broken chair near by, there lay his
 tobacco and pipes.

And draped on the bed, just over his head,
 was a flag of the Stars and Stripes.

The Sister said, as we neared his bed: "I
 know he will welcome you so,
For he raves at night, and sees in his
 fright, the scenes of long ago."

Then his eyes grew bright, and he sat up-
 right, but his gaze seemed far away.
And he bowed his head at some things he
 said as he told his story that day.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

“You’ll think it queer, that I should here
unfold this tale,” he said,

“It’s a story of pride—and a man who
died”—then he touched the flag o’er
his head.

“A man o’ war lay, in Frisco bay, and I
was one of her crew.

The red blood of youth coursed my veins,
and, forsooth, the red liquor ran there
too!

“I drifted one night, where the lights were
bright, and the harlots played their
game.

I was drunk as hell, and I couldn’t tell a
blush of rouge from shame.

And the lines of sin might well have been
the furrows wrought by care;

For in passion’s light, at the dead of night,
the jade looked passing fair.

“She pleaded with me to set her free from
the bondage of men and sin;

To lift her above a hireling’s love, and the
mire she’d sunken in.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

And the bold pretext of the woman got
 next to my whiskey-sodden heart,
And the story she told took a terrible hold,
 and I believed—at least in part.

“So I answered her, yes, and married—I
 guess (God knows by what code, law
 or rule),

And the very next day, I took her away,
 and deserted my ship—like a fool.

On the Chilian coast, we made the most of
 a gold grubber’s simple fare,

And I shared my life with this kind of wife
 in a shack we builded there.

“The old life had grown stale, and I quit
 the bright trail, when this woman
 came into my life.

And by Heaven I swear; I gave her the
 care and devotion of any wife.

And so grateful she seemed, and her eyes
 so gleamed with something more
 than desire,

That I thought the whole of a woman’s
 soul had consumed the carnal fire.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

“Then we quarreled one night, when the
lantern light in the shack was burning
low.

She was tired of life, she said, as a wife,
and I guess what she said was so.

I knew, for a spell, she'd been false as hell,
and I took her to task for her deeds;
Then she raved 'round the shack, and
swore she'd go back where men didn't
question her creeds.

“So I spoke of the gold we'd hoarded, and
told the woman, as partners, we
Would play the game fair, and the stuff
we'd share, ere we parted company.
Then I saw her go, so silent and slow, to
the room we'd called our own,
And the air grew chill, and 'twas deathly
still and I shivered, and waited, alone.

“The shadows hung low, and the lantern's
glow looked down with a ghastly grin,
While 'round the shack, through window
and crack, the cold was creeping in.
Then a rustle I heard, and with never a
word, she came through the shadowy
gloom,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

And I saw she was dressed in her tawdry
best, and groomed, as women groom.

“Her manner was bold, and I thought of
the gold, so I stepped between her and
the door.

Then a sting in my back—the room grew
black—and I don’t remember more
Till they found me next day, in the blood
where I lay, and brought me to St.
Helene.

The woman, she must have piked out with
the dust, for neither has since been
seen.”

Then he turned and laid bare his back, and
there across the shrunken spine,
Was an ugly scar that reached so far as a
sabre might design.

Then he lifted high each withered thigh,
and dropped it helplessly.

And he turned his head, as he tearfully
said: “They’re dead as hell, you see.”

Have you felt the spell of the silence that
fell on a tempest threatened sea

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Like the hush of death, ere the icy breath
of the storm had broken free?

Have you known a fear that seemed to
sear, till it laid your whole soul bare,
And gripped in a spell that seemed to fore-
tell of impending dangers there?

Then you understand how a silence can
brand, and how it got me, that day,
And palled me with dread, like a place of
the dead, ere the old man turned to
say:

“It’s not the sin sodden, nightly trodden
path I’ve stumbled in,
Nor the hellish grave my youth I gave, in
the slimy slough of sin.

“It’s not the shame of the harlot’s game,
nor the years that inquiry cost,
That brings the sadness and blinding mad-
ness, for I staked—and played—and
lost.

Those scores are all paid—for the woman
has laid me away in the flesh here to
rot,
And left of a man, what a living death
can, and I know I deserve what I got.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

“What’s burning my soul, like a fiery coal,
and making the past such a hurt,
Is to die face to face with the damning dis-
grace of a soldier who’d go and
desert.”

From a coverlet fold, a sack of gold then,
he drew, and held to me;
“A little gift from the miners’ shift” he
said: “and the company.

“Will you take it, please, across the seas,
before it— is— too late?
And buy the discharge—of Peter Conarge
deserter—in ‘Seventy-eight.’ ”
Then he loosened his hold on the bag of
gold, and clutched at the flag o’er his
head,
And he struggled to speak—but his voice
grew weak—then I looked—and the
man was dead.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

WAITING.

Weary months of waiting—waiting;
Endless days that come and go;
Marching, drilling, watching, hating;
That's the only life we know.

With the greasers sniping—sniping,
From the sand dunes on the hill,
And the awful heat that's gripping
At our vitals when we drill.

With the lizards creeping—creeping;
Scorpions pestering our souls;
Deadly fever always sleeping
In the murky water holes.

And the vermin crawling—crawling,
Make the nights in camp a hell—
While the snipers' bullets falling,
Make the days a hell, as well.

On our bellies, like the vermin,
In this flea-infested sand,
With but rifle-pit to turn in,
We have slept with gun in hand.

Weary months, without complaining,
Keeping back the rebel band,
We've been soldiering—campaigning,
In this God-forsaken land.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

WOODEN SHIPS AND IRON MEN

They talk o' battleboats an' cruisers
An' how them iron craft can go
So fast the enemy are losers,
'Fore they give us half a show.
But, in the old days—why, bless ye, then,
'Twas wooden ships an' iron men!

Today, they blow like a sou'west gale
'Bout them newfangled things for war,
An' brag o' fleets that never fail,
But I can't see what they need 'em for;
Give me the good old times again,
Of wooden ships an' iron men.

We didn't hanker much for show,
And a sailor then had nerves o' steel,
An' Farragut worried along, ye know,
With wooden ships, at old Mobile.
I'll tell ye, mates, 'twas livin', then,
On wooden ships, with iron men.

I've been aboard them war machines,
An' I'll be blowed! There wa'n't a thing
Looked nateral 'cept the sailors' jeans!
An' talk o' junk!—I know I'd fling

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

A lot o' the cargo into the blue,
Ef I was skipper o' one o' them craft,
An' if I had charge o' that gentleman crew
They'd clear them decks, too, fore an' aft.

Why, they stood 'round like soldiers do,
An' manned the rail, an' didn't dare
To talk an' act like a crew ought to.
So I shifted course, right then an' there,
'Bout all o' this brave seaman sop,
For dinged near all, if I sighted 'em fair,
Didn't know the jibboom from the mizzen
top,
An' bless your soul, they didn't care!

One thing bothered me more 'n the rest,
But I didn't say nothin'—only think!
Now, jest as sure as East an' West,
Sometime one o' them ships 'll sink,
For God, in His scheme o' the universe,
Kep' most o' the elements out o' the seas.
An' gravity's laws ye can't reverse,
With a whale of a ship like one o' these.

So it's back to the wind-jammer days, for
me,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

When an enemy seen, was an enemy won.
When we hove to an' boarded, with cut-
 lesses free,
An', lashed to the foe, we fought on the
 run.

Why, bless ye, mates, I'd ship again,
On the wooden ships, with iron men.



S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE BURNING OF THE NIPSIC.

The U. S. S. Nipsic was burned, on Lummi Island, August 28, 1915, after an enviable record of nearly fifty years in the United States Navy. She fought with Farragut's fleet in Mobile Bay, and, while in Samoan waters in 1889, during one of the worst typhoons in naval history, rescued the crew of the sinking German ship, Eber. (News clipping.)

Storm battered, ripe with honored years,
 beside the sea upkeeled;
On each decaying plate appears the meas-
 ure of her yield;
Caressed by wash of friendly seas, between
 the tides she lies,
Succumbed to her infirmities; ill-honored
 sacrifice.
To salvage vultures fed for gain; in open
 mart she stood,
While masters bid, and bid again—and
 chuckled: "She is good."
Bartered! Sold for paltry coin, to stuff a
 nation's till!
'T were better pirates should purloin, or
 ocean grave to fill,
Than o'er her aged hull should gloat, trade
 mongers, with their gold—
Than her obituary note should be: "For
 salvage sold."

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Where are those much chartered ones, who
cry the nation's worth;

Who save the heir-looms of our land from
fire and flood and dearth;

Those honored guardians of fame, who
worship at the shrine—

Who would perpetuate the name, and trim
the lamps that shine

On every martyr of the past; who guard
each deed that stood,

Or will stand, alone, unasked, for man's
eternal good—

Where are they—the chosen ones, who
keep the memories green,

And glory in our martyred sons—preserve
each cherished scene—

The saviors of Mount Vernon, and the
haunts of Grant and Lee—

Where is our glorious, grand, Historical
Society?

Why do they stand, and mutely stand, and
see the torch applied—

How view that pyre upon the sand, with-
out a twinge of pride?

Ye gods! 'Twere meet, I say, and more—
if shade of Farragut came

Each night to haunt them at their door,
until they writhe in shame.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE BURIAL OF FLAHERTY.

Flaherty died o' fever, at the close of an
Eastern day.

Died aboard the tramp "Eliza," in the
gulf o' Sibuguey.

Flaherty died o' fever, an' we shuffled the
cards an' drew,

To see who'd bury Flaherty—from out
the Irish crew.

Flaherty made but one request before he
died, sez he:

"Now mind ye put me in a box, whiniver
ye bury me."

The divil a bit fer a corpse agin, we'd put
on lugs at sea,

But whin Flaherty died, the crew all
agreed they'd treat him respectfully.

So the tramp hove to, an' the lots they
fell to the second mate an' meself.

A box we made an' laid him in, an' we
built fer his head a shelf;

Lashed to his feet a grate bar or two, to
steady him on his ride,

Nailed him tight, an' swung him clear, an'
lowered him over the side;

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Eased him down where the dinghy lay, an'
we handled him tenderly—

An' we pulled away; the mate, McVey,
meself, an' Flaherty.

The moon came out o' the rollin' sea, as
big as a capstan head,
The oar locks creaked, an' the trade winds
moaned, an' the mate he looked at
the dead.

We rose on the breast of a ground sea
swell, fer we neared Illana Bay;
“ 'Tis no place here to bury the dead, four
fathoms sheer away,

We need,” sez I, an' we dared not wait fer
the drift of the changin' tide.

So we out in the teeth of a nor'east trade,
where the deep sea billows ride.

We rolled in the trough of a rough beam
sea—an' our flesh began to creep

As we looked at the load—but with nivver
a word, we tumbled it into the deep.

A bit of a splash wuz all that we heard—
an' the coffin sank from sight;

The low winds sighed, an' we pulled away,
into the sea locked night.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

“He’s down to stay,” sez the second mate,
as he heaved a sigh at me.

Sez I: “ ’Tis so, an’ it’s sure good bye to
poor old Flaherty.”

Now the mate wuz nivver a brave man at
all, an’ he pulled a shaky stroke

As he gazed astern, an’ the moon shone
full on his face—but he nivver spoke,
Till o’ sudden he stiffened, an’ dropped
his oars, an’ he stared like a man
insane;

“Saints above us, Mike,” sez he, “He’s
comin’ back again!”

I looked, an’ sure he wuz doin’ that same—
an’ it didn’t look good to me—

Fer bolt upright on a followin’ sea, bob-
bin’, wuz Flaherty!

The mate he prayed, and the seas came in,
fer we rode to a floodin’ tide—

I thought o’ me home in the County o’
Clare—then looked to the starb’d
side,

An’ there, hard by, in a bight o’ the seas,
so close I could nigh leap the space,

Wuz Flaherty’s coffin, the lid busted
through, an’ from it stuck Flaherty’s
face!

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Now the mate he wuz nivver a brave man
at all, an' as fer meself—nivver mind;
'Twas a case of meself an' the mate, ye can
see—or Flaherty, comin' behind;
Fer the passin' looked bad, without shift-
in' our course—an Flaherty wuz set
in his ways,
So a boat hook I snatched, an' whin Flah-
erty passed, I lammed him a couple
midways—
'Twas the last of Flaherty, but I swear to
this day, whin we shuffle the cards
fer the deal,
The mate he turns pale, an' he speaks not
a word, but gazes away out to sea—
An' the crew all allows that he thinks o'
the night whin we buried Flaherty.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

A TOAST.

Drink deep from the cup,
As they round 'em up
For a cruise to God knows where—
There'll be less of a crew,
If the poor devils knew—
When the ship returns from there.

So drink to the crew,
And the skipper, too,
And life on the raging main,
We're off again,
And God knows when,
We'll drink together again.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

SPEEDIN'.

Ye can talk o' automobiles,
Give me yer "high," an' "low,"
spiels,
Prate about yer racin' cars, an' sich as
these,
Ye can take yer air-plane mazes,
Ride in yer electric chaises,
Er indulge in any speed mania y' please;

Ye can have yer palace liners,
Gorge yerself aboard yer diners,
Gape in wonder at the latest submarine;
Ye can burn th' dust a-racin',
Keep th' old man death a-pacin',
Ye can worship at the shrine o' gasoline;
Be a slave t' modern speedin'!
It's none o' *my* advice ye're needin',
Hit th' high spots right through life, fer
all o' me;
But there's no speed dream so sweet
As t' watch th' tops'l sheet,
When she draws afore a spankin' breeze,
at sea.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Ye can have yer grand pianos,
Thrill at high pitched, fine, sopranos,
Ye can lend yer ear t' choice orchestral
 strains;

Choose yer famous obligato,
Slow an' dreamy, or staccato,
Fall in ecstasy before its sweet refrains;

Ye can dote on librettos,
Worship tenors an' falsettos,
Feast on chords an' sharps an' flats, as
 long 's ye please;

But no music 's half so sweet,
To me it's oft been drink an' meat—
As th' music o' th' laughin', singin' seas.

Ye can covet high position,
Sacrifice, to yer ambition,
Every grain o' self respect that in ye lies;
Ye can gain a social prestige
That will banish every vestige
O' th' man ye used ter be, before th' rise.

Ye can set th' world a pace
That will suicide yer race,
An' ye'll leave th' world no better when
 ye go;

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Ye can serve th' will o' Mammon,
But unless ye put th' ban on,
Ye are purty apt t' reap th' crop ye sow.

Ye can seek th' crowded places,
Mingle with th' mongrel races,
Burn yer little candle out, fer all o' me;
But while Heaven's still a-givin'
Us th' blessin's o' mere livin',
Give me th' simpler, saner life upon th'
sea.



S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE GRAVES AT MAGDALENA.

The white fleet silent, spectral, lay
In Magdalena's tranquil bay.

Aloft, the twinkling signal stars
Played among the masts and spars.

From a hundred ports the shafts of light
Shone out upon the tropic night.

The watches, hourly vigil kept,
While below, the squadron slept.

From each cruiser echoed there
The hourly watchword on the air.

From all—save one—whose watch instead,
Was a ceaseless vigil o'er her dead.

Whose souls on board prayed God for
 light,
And many a prayer was said that night

For the men who raved in their bunks
 below,
For those who had gone—and those to go.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Death was stalking among her crew,
As the hungry fire of fever grew.

At the midnight hour, with muffled oar,
The starboard watch was rowed ashore.

The funeral rites again were said—
Again at night they buried their dead.

Four now lay beneath the sand,
And God alone, held in his hand

The fate, that night, of many more,
For, off the Magdalena shore,

A seething, quenchless fire of souls,
Lay the ship which paid the tolls

Of death, with fever stricken men;
And paid again—and paid again.

Years have passed, since those men died,
And ships have ridden to many a tide

In Magdalena's quiet bay.
But the graves that were there—where
 are they?

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Lonely graves in a foreign land.
No shaft of marble marks the sand,

With epitah to praise the dead,
But only bits of wood, instead,

Mark the graves—which, worse than none,
Are now but ghastly heaps of bone.

No man can say when the deed was done,
But those graves opened, one, by one.

High above the highest tide,
Where the hot sands shift and slide,

Wind swept, and wracked by earth's tor-
ments,
They gave their dead to the elements.

The rattlesnake bored and shaped his nest,
Beneath each smoothly mounded crest.

The gopher burrowed beneath the dead,
And undermined each earthly bed.

The coyote slunk from the mountainside,

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

And feasted and gloated—then sickened
and died,

On the carrion flesh he greedily fed,
And he died where he feasted—beside
the dead.

So the bones of beast and the bones of men,
Have shared the lonely graves, since then,

And the buzzards come and circle o'er,
And narrow their circle more and more,

Until they drop and pick each bone—
Then rise and leave the dead alone.

Far from the shores of their native land,
Forgotten, alone, in the alkali sand.

Left to the vultures, to crumble, decay;
The bones of brave men are lying, today.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE VETERAN.

The city streets are gay with light,
The cheers are loud and long;
For war has been declared tonight
And youth is running strong.

One figure stands unseen, unsought,
Unpitied, and alone,
Where jostled by the throng he fought
But feebly, and unknown.

Aged, bent, and dim of sight.
Deaf and lame and slow,
He hobbled to the street tonight
To cheer the boys that go.

A veteran? Yes, look out! He'll fall.
He's nearly blind—one eye.
Twice he's answered duty's call
But now they pass him by.

Feeble, old, misunderstood,
But valiant, still, of heart!
Remember, boys,—if he but could,
He'd do his little part.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

He hears the bugle blasts that stir
The patriot's blood in you;
His dim eyes catch in yours the blur—
He knows its meaning too.

And he'd avenge his country's wrong
As quick as you or I;
But he is weak—and we are strong—
And so they pass him by.



S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

THE OLD GUN DECK.

Remember, boys, the old gun deck
And the good times we had there?
The hammocks swinging neck and neck,
The mischief in the air
When "taps" had gone, and silently
We tucked in snug and warm,
Till "jimmy-legs" sneaked up to see
Each hammock's rounded form.
When all was still and lights were out
And "jimmy-legs" had gone,
Remember how we'd prance about
And talk till nearly dawn?
How we raved and vowed and swore
We'd never ship again,
And how we longed to go ashore
And live like other men.
And when a draft of rookies came,
Right off the farm "By Heck,"
Remember we upheld the name
Of that old gun deck?
We lashed their hammocks, bow and stern,
We shifted billets, too.
We gave them every chance to learn
What sailors ought to do.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Remember how, at reveille,
We'd try to steal a nap?
Till Hans, the bos'n's mate, would see,
And rouse us with a slap,
Then the old "square-head" would yell:
"Up you, now, all han's,"
And from the galley'd come the smell
Of bacon in the pans.
And when the mess was spread again,
And cleaned up, every speck,
The smoking lamp was lit, and then
We'd scrub the old gun deck.
You recollect, that day in port,
The old deck shone like glass,
When every jack was paying court,
And dancing with his lass?
And how the old piano sang,
And how each roguish glance
And gentle touch, and voice that rang,
Would thrill us in the dance?
And, boys, that night when all was still,
(You won't dispute, I reckon.)
The little god that shoots to kill,
Shot up that whole gun deck.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

O' how we loathed the old routine,
And how we cursed it, then,
But, boys, each day of service seen,
Has made us better men.
The days we longed for then, are here,
Those days we thought so free.
Each dream of things we held so dear,
Is now reality.
No "jimmy-legs" to rouse us, now,
No reveille at dawn,
No messmates' ringing laughter—how
We miss them, now they're gone—
Ah! boys, what treasured friendships
 then,
How sweet, if we could beck
The past, and find our berths again,
On the old gun deck.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

A TRIBUTE.

Hush the turmoil of the street
And for one brief hour, tread
With cadence to the martial beat
Of muffled drums—for he is dead.

At desk or throttle, forge or wheel,
Lift, for one brief spell, the hands
That guide the daily course, and feel
The pride for which a hero stands.
The fame of each victorious gun,
Still echoes from Manilla Bay.
But, of its patriot, warrior son,
The nation, grieving, thinks today.

Then break our national ensign free—
But sadly, to the morning skies.
For him, war stained, she swept the sea.
Tear stained, for him, half masted
flies.

He rests now where those grim outposts
Of marble sentinels watch o'er
The graves of long departed hosts—
The heroes that have gone before.

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

HOMeward BOUND.

We're leaving the East.

Do you know what it means?

Have you known it, adored it.

And drunk in its scenes;

Cursed it, abhorred it—

Yet played it to win?

This land steeped in beauty,

And reeking with sin,

Where your conscience creeps out,

And the devil creeps in,

When the spell o' the East

Gets under your skin.

Have you sought it—then thought it

The worst in the world?

In its maelstrom of gayety,

Dizzily whirled,

Have you fought it? to thwart it

You tried? Then, outwitted,

And—drunk with the ecstasy

Of it—submitted?

Merciful East!

O, the balm in thy stings!

O, the sweet lethargy

That thy bitterness brings!

Land of rare beauty

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

From near, and afar;
From the white snows of Fuji
To the white harbor bar,
Where the cherry bloom petals
O'er the pathways are strewn,
The rice fields are waving,
And, soft, comes the croon
Of the wind in the pine trees
Afar on the hill;
The chimes in the temples
Never are still.
The chant at the altars
Is ceaseless, and low,
As the silent celestials
Pass to and fro.
Land of the Jap,
And the pig-eyed Chinees,
Of heathen tradition
And weird fantasy;
Idols, and shrines,
And grinning brass gods
(By Buddha approved
With omnipotent nods.)
For the Evil One, dragons
Reach out with their claws,
Spitting javelins of flame

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

From their hideous maws.
Land where the germs
Of the cholera lurk,
And pestilence thrives
In the filth and the murk;
Where men's skill and cunning
Are matched in the mart;
Like the three-piece-ie dollar
Deceit is their art.
Here, the oldest of temples,
The sacredest shrines,
Sensuous women,
And choicest of wines.
Oft, we've watched the sleek liners
Creeping eastward to sea,
Their steel hearts, with indifference,
Throbbing lazily.
Full heavy, our hearts,
As they wended their way
To the land we'd return to,
God willing, some day.
We've been here three years,
And it seems fully ten.
We're wiser for coming—
We may come again.
O, land, where traditions

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Of dead dynasties ring!
'Round thy crumbling temples
Fond memories cling.
We're leaving this fair land
Of rickshaws, and things,
Land where the almond-eyed
Geisha girl sings.
Going back to God's country
Where the code is the same
For the morals of padre,
Or demi-monde dame.
Where the passions of men
Speak less of the beast,
And their honor, far-reaching,
As west is from east.

*Ere the sun's o'er the fore-yard
We'll be on our way.
We're flyin' the homeward
Bound pennant today.*

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

A MESSAGE.

You men of that unfathomed wild:
Where goes no man unreconciled
To wrestle with the destinies
Ordained upon the seven seas;
As one who holds your ills at heart,
Has lived of your strange life a part,
To you, of every clime and clan,
Here I would speak, as man to man;
Men hailed from forecandle and poop,
On yacht and schooner, bark and sloop,
On liner, merchantman and brig,
Split-s'l, cat, yawl and full-rig;
On gun-boat, cruiser, man o' war—
These simple rhymes were written for.

I would that each befitting line
Might be a tiny, lasting shrine
To all your noble, roving kind—
And to their deeds I've had in mind.
The men who've sniffed the deep sea air;
Who've braved the seas with poles
stripped bare;
Who've heard the free screws pound and
race;
Who've felt the salt sprays lash the face;

S E R V I C E R H Y M E S

Who've lost the lights of shoal and beach,
And sailed where lead could never reach
The darkened slime beneath their keel;
Men who, at sea, were made to feel
The joy of rough, God-fearing times;
To them—I give my sailor rhymes.



